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Report on V&A Symposium

MoDA's Education Officer, Richard Lumb, recently took part in a symposium organized by The Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning through Design (CETLD) and the Art Design Media Subject Centre of the Higher Education Academy (ADM-HEA). The day, held at the V&A Museum, looked at some examples of best practice in supporting Higher Education students' learning in the context of museums. It was an opportunity for museum educators and higher education tutors to share pedagogical approaches and to discuss collaborative activities developed to support art and design students' learning from museums.

Museums were originally established as educational institutions, and many – MoDA included – see education as being at the very heart of what they do. Like many other museums, MoDA has a thriving primary education program, and strong links with a number of local secondary schools. But, there is ambivalence among museum educators in general about how to support Higher Education students' learning, and uncertainty on the part of tutors about how best to use the resources offered by museums.

As a university museum, MoDA offers support for student learning in a variety of ways, but Richard used this opportunity to share information about MoDA's Student Workshop Leader Scheme. This scheme recruits Middlesex undergraduates and first year graduates to design and deliver art activities for young people as part of the museum's Saturday morning Arts Club for 8-14 year olds. Students gain paid employment and valuable teaching experience. The goal is to enhance students' confidence and to improve their personal presentation and employability skills, while simultaneously providing a high quality art-related experience for the children.

The scheme has now been running for a couple of years, and has proved to be a great success. Students join the scheme because they wish to gain experience of teaching and to develop their skills of working with children and young people. Many wish to get more experience of designing and delivering their own art activities, and welcome the opportunity to pass on their skills and passion for art to a new audience. Student Workshop Leaders find the experience of working with Arts Club members to be refreshing, rewarding and inspirational. They gain valuable teaching experience and increase their confidence in public speaking, activity content and art room management. They improve their project management and communication skills and learn responsibility and the ability to work on their own initiative. They are also paid for their work and gain a valuable experience to include on their CV.

This case study offered by MoDA was one of the few initiatives discussed at this symposium which does not rely on external funding, and which is therefore entirely sustainable in the long term. Richard's contribution was a useful reminder that 'learning' within the museum need not be

directly related to the museum's collections, but might equally be about developing skills and experience that will equip the student for their future careers, wherever they might be.

<http://www.adm.heacademy.ac.uk/events/collecting-experiences-enriching-design-students-learning-in-the-museum>